



COMDTPUB 16700.4
NVIC 4-00
JUN 13, 2000

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 4-00

Subj: RENEWAL FOR CONTINUITY OF LICENSES AND QUALIFIED RATINGS
ISSUED UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS, 1978
(STCW-78)

1. PURPOSE. This Circular provides information concerning continuing authority of licenses and qualified ratings (credentials) valid for service on seagoing vessels that were issued in accordance with STCW-78 and which have been, or will be, renewed for continuity purposes only. These credentials are those issued prior to February 1, 2002, based on service or training that began before August 1, 1998, where the mariner has not met the requirements of the 1995 amendments to STCW-78.
2. ACTION. Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection should ensure that this NVIC is brought to the attention of maritime interests within their areas of responsibility. It is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/index.htm>.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
4. BACKGROUND.
 - a. In 1987, the United States revised the regulations governing the issuance of mariner's credentials to comply with STCW-78. The United States became party to STCW-78 in 1991 and began to issue STCW-78 endorsements in 1995. In implementing STCW-78, the United States continued to issue credentials in the forms of licenses and merchant mariner documents familiar to United States mariners. When a mariner was issued a credential subject to STCW-78, an additional STCW form was issued to validate the credential as meeting the international standards.

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A																										
B	*	8	10		1		1	1																		2
C					5*						2		6*	2											1	
D											1	*														
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- b. In 1995, STCW-78 was significantly revised. The resulting amendments to the Convention (STCW-95) added significant requirements for formal training as well as requirements for assessments of a mariner's practical skills through demonstrations of competence.
- c. STCW-95 regulation I/15 allows signatory parties to continue to renew STCW certificates that were issued under STCW-78 until February 1, 2002. On and after that date, all certificates must be issued in accordance with STCW-95.
- d. STCW-95 regulation I/11 allows parties to compare the requirements of STCW-95 to the requirements for issuance of a certificate under STCW-78 and develop required training and assessments to close any gap between the two. All certificates issued under STCW-78 expire at midnight January 31, 2002, and must be replaced by an STCW-95 certificate by that date.
- e. The United States has allowed a mariner who wished to renew a credential but who did not require full operating authority to renew "for continuity only." This permits the mariner to have an updated credential for purposes of a valid date of issue, but does not require the mariner to meet all requirements for renewal. The renewed credential does not authorize a mariner to serve in the capacities listed on the credential until the mariner meets all conditions for renewal.
- f. When a credential is renewed "for continuity only," an STCW form is not issued to the mariner.

5. DISCUSSION.

- a. Mariners who have previously elected to renew a credential for continuity purposes and who want to retain the ability to re-activate their credential with full operating authority must meet the gap closing requirements before February 1, 2002. After that date, their credential will no longer conform to STCW and will not be valid for issuance of an STCW-95 validation certification.
 - (1) The gap closing requirements for deck officers are: Proof of proficiency in bridge team management, basic safety training, and proof of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats (STCW Code Table A-II/1). Also, while not required, a deck officer who does not qualify in automatic radar plotting aids (ARPA) and global maritime distress signaling system (GMDSS) will have their STCW forms limited to service on vessels not equipped with those installations.
 - (2) The gap closing requirements for engineer officers are: Proof of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats and basic safety training (STCW Code Table A-III/1).
 - (3) The gap closing requirement for a rating is basic safety training (STCW Code Tables A-VI/1-1, 1-2, 1-3 and 1-4).
- b. Many former seagoing personnel have entered other areas of the maritime profession where the authority provided by their credentials is not required by law or regulation. However, their current employment may be based upon their attainments as a seagoing mariner. Also, their credentials represent their attainments and may be a source of

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personal pride. Therefore, a mariner who elects to not meet the requirements of STCW-95 may continue to have his or her credential renewed "for continuity only." If the mariner should elect to reinstate the operating authority on or after February 1, 2002, he or she will be limited to service on inland vessels, seagoing vessels not subject to the STCW, and other seagoing vessels as listed in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, section 10.202(k). To reinstate full operating authority for service on all seagoing vessels, the mariner will be required to establish competence based on the STCW-95 requirements.

- c. Mariners who hold a credential originally issued in accordance with STCW-78 and who have since qualified for certification in accordance with STCW-95 are in full compliance with the STCW. Mariners who are issued a credential based on service or training that began on or after August 1, 1998, also meet the requirements of STCW-95. A mariner meeting STCW-95 may renew his or her credential "for continuity only" based on existing regulations. The mariner will retain the ability to restore full operating authority by completing any outstanding requirements for renewal.



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